

Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

The Gulf of Maine

Abstract

Type of action: Administrative
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Fish and Wildlife Service
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The Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge Complex fully compares four management alternatives. Its eight appendixes provide additional information supporting our analysis. A brief overview of each alternative follows.

Alternative A Current Management

Refuge expansion of 1,034 acres and continued current management. This is the “no action” alternative required by regulations under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Although it would expand the Petit Manan refuge by 1,034 acres beyond the current approved boundary, selecting this alternative would otherwise maintain the status quo in refuge management actions over the next 15 years. Thus, it provides a baseline for comparing or contrasting the three “action” alternatives.

Alternative B Preferred Alternative

Refuge expansion of 2,467 acres and notably expanded management and recreation. Selecting this alternative would expand the Petit Manan refuge by 2,314 acres beyond the current approved boundary on 87 nationally significant seabird, wading bird, or bald eagle coastal nesting islands and 153 acres of wetlands on the mainland. It would add six new seabird restoration projects to our present six, and intensify the focus of our biological programs on birds of high conservation priority in the Gulf of Maine. It would increase opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, especially in our environmental education and interpretation programs, build new trails on the Gouldsboro Bay, Sawyers Marsh, and Corea Heath divisions, and open the Petit Manan Point Division for deer hunting. And, it would recommend that 13 Refuge Complex islands in 8 wilderness study areas be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Refuge staffing and budgets would increase commensurately. We recommend this alternative for approval.

Alternative C

Refuge expansion of 6,463 acres and greatly expanded management and recreation. Selecting this alternative would expand the Petit Manan refuge by 6,463 acres beyond the current approved boundary, adding 6,310 acres on all or parts of 151 seabird or bald eagle nesting islands and 153 acres of wetlands on the mainland. Its wilderness proposal mirrors the proposal in alternative B. It would create 12 new seabird restoration projects, and allow trapping under refuge regulations on three mainland divisions and Bois Bubert and Cross islands. New trails would be developed on refuge mainland divisions, the same as alternative B. This alternative would also require the greatest budget and staffing increases.

Alternative D

No refuge expansion beyond the current approved boundary and reduced management with minimal human intrusion. This alternative adopts a custodial or low intervention approach to management. Selecting it would neither expand a refuge nor recommend wilderness designation. It would restore only minimal seabird habitat, focus our public use, environmental education and interpretation on offsite programs, and close all refuge islands to public access. Except for our emergency intervention to avert or mitigate catastrophic events, it would leave refuge habitats and species to the effects of environmental processes.